



Solutions for a
Toxic-Free Tomorrow

Testimony of Sarah Woodbury, Vice President of Policy and Advocacy, Defend Our Health
In Support to LD 958 “An Act to Prohibit Eminent Domain on Tribal Lands”
Before the Judiciary Committee
April 4, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Judiciary committee. My name is Sarah Woodbury. I am the Vice President of Policy and Advocacy for Defend Our Health. Defend Our Health’s mission is to make sure that everyone has equal access to safe food and drinking water, healthy homes, and products that are toxic-free and climate friendly. I am here to testify in support of LD 958 “An Act to Prohibit Eminent Domain on Tribal Lands”.

Defend believes that the issue of Wabanaki tribal sovereignty is one of the great injustices of our time. The Wabanaki people have been stewards of this land for thousands of years before white settlers arrived. They have lived in harmony with the land and water, managing natural resources so that future generations can thrive. Since the arrival of European settlers, the Wabanaki people have lost 98% of their population as well as access to most of their land and water. The state should not be allowed to add insult to injury and have more land taken away without consultation or agreement.

Taking tribal land without consultation is against federal policy. As with many other issues facing the Wabanaki people, the 1980 settlement act has excluded Maine tribes from these federal protections. There are historical examples of the harm eminent domain can have on Wabanaki lands. In 1925 the state of Maine took land from the Passamaquoddy in Sipayik to build Route 190, which cuts through the heart of the Passamaquoddy Reservation. This land was taken without tribal input. LD 958 would ensure that no such action happens again without tribal consultation. This bill encourages collaboration between the state and the tribes, something that we think is important. The state needs to step up and do a better job of collaboration with the tribes.

Maine’s tribes are an important part of fabric of life here in Maine. Maine needs to restore the sovereign rights of all tribal nations in Maine so we can begin to heal the deep wounds that our tribal neighbors have suffered in at the hands of both European settlers and the State itself. Eminent domain is yet another example of Maine’s tribes being treated differently than every other federally recognized sovereign tribal nations in the U.S. We urge you to do the right thing by voting unanimously “ought to pass” on LD 958.